

Thatcham Park Church of England Primary School

Park Avenue, Thatcham, Berkshire, RG18 4NP

Inspection dates 1–2 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils make inconsistent progress. They do not make good enough progress in all parts of the school.
- Pupils' results in writing and mathematics are not consistently high enough.
- Too few of the most able pupils achieve high results at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good. Not all teachers give pupils enough challenge to enable them to progress well.
- Not all teachers clearly plan for the next steps in pupils' learning. Sometimes pupils complete activities without having a clear idea of what they will learn by doing so.
- School leaders and governors have not ensured that teaching has remained good over time, or that pupils make good enough progress in all parts of the school.
- Middle leaders are not yet sufficiently involved in bringing about improvements to teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher has raised expectations in the school. She has ensured that the quality of teaching is monitored well and that teachers are expected to perform to a high standard. Teaching is improving as a result.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning. They behave well in lessons, in the playground and when moving around the school. Pupils feel safe and well looked after by the school.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are encouraged to explore their feelings and reflect on spiritual values thoughtfully.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors saw teaching in all classes. They observed one assembly, 20 lessons and pupils' behaviour in the playground and at lunchtime. Fourteen lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils, four members of the governing body, the headteacher and other members of staff.
- The inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, including support for pupils who need extra help. They heard pupils read and examined pupils' work in their exercise books and on classroom and corridor wall displays.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including plans for what pupils will learn in each subject, plans for the school's future development, the school's use of the sport premium and pupil premium funding. They also examined the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe, pupils' attendance records, minutes of governing body meetings, records of how pupils' learning is checked and tracked, and records of how the quality of teaching is checked.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers by considering 56 responses to the online Parent View survey, and through discussions with several parents.
- Inspectors took staff views into consideration by looking at questionnaires completed by 35 staff members and through discussions with several members of staff.

Inspection team

Steven Popper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Shears

Additional Inspector

Christopher Crouch

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than that found in most schools. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is lower than average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus and those with statements of special educational needs is higher than in most other schools. Some pupils have speech, language and communication needs, whilst others have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or other needs.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have two part-time Nursery classes and two full-time Reception classes provided for them.
- The headteacher took up her post in January 2014. The inclusion leader took up her post in March 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is good, or better, by making certain that teachers give pupils, including the most able, a high level of challenge at all times.
- Ensure that all pupils make enough progress by making certain that teachers clearly plan for the next steps in pupils' learning.
- Strengthen leadership and management by increasing middle leaders' involvement in improving the quality of teaching in the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress is not consistently good enough across the school, and because results in writing and mathematics are not consistently high enough.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills below those typical for their age. They make good progress and are well prepared for Key Stage 1.
- Last year, pupils' results in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 and in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 were too low. Pupils currently in the school are on track to achieve much better results in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 this year, but some results in writing are still likely to be too low.
- Too few of the most able pupils achieve the highest results in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1, although they do better at the end of Key Stage 2. This is because teachers vary in the amount of challenge that they give to pupils.
- Pupils make different amounts of progress in different parts of the school. Pupils make fast progress in some years, but their progress is too slow in others. This is because teachers do not always clearly plan for the next steps in pupils' learning.
- The school is successfully narrowing the gap between pupils eligible for additional funding and other pupils. This year the gaps in attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 are about two and a half terms in mathematics, and about half a term in reading and writing. These are narrower gaps than in previous years. However, eligible pupils do not make securely good progress in all parts of the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make variable progress in line with other pupils in the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement as it is inconsistent in quality and does not ensure that pupils' progress is securely good enough across the school.
- There is not enough good teaching in the school. Teachers do not always clearly plan for the next steps in pupils' learning. Pupils are sometimes given tasks to complete without having a clear enough idea of what they will learn as a result.
- Not all teachers give pupils, particularly the most able, enough challenge. As a consequence, pupils, including the most able, do not always achieve well or make enough progress.
- Some teachers use questioning effectively to draw out pupils' understanding and develop it, but this is inconsistent across the school.
- Teaching is improving as a result of the recently appointed headteacher's high expectations of teachers and robust monitoring of the quality of teaching. Teachers now have a stronger understanding of the standard of teaching that is expected from them. The quality of teaching in the school is improving as a result.
- Teachers and pupils work well together. Teachers respect pupils and show that they value them.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is effective and develops children's basic skills well, notably in writing. Similarly, teaching at the top end of the school is challenging and focused. Children and pupils in these areas of the school learn and progress well as a result.
- Teaching assistants are often used effectively to support individuals and groups of pupils, although this varies to some extent across the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to education and are keen to learn. Their positive approach has contributed to the progress they make. However, pupils' positive attitudes to learning have not yet helped to ensure that pupils make good enough progress in all parts of the school. This is why behaviour is not outstanding.
- Pupils lose interest when teaching is weaker and does not offer them enough challenge. However, pupils' behaviour in lessons is always polite and pupils are cooperative. Low level disruption is uncommon.
- Pupils behave well towards one another in the playground and during lunchtime. They move around the school courteously and with consideration for others.
- The school manages pupils' behaviour well, and pupils know the standards of behaviour that are expected of them. School records show very few incidents of poor behaviour over time.
- The school ensures that pupils are aware of different types of bullying, such as cyber bullying, physical bullying and verbal bullying. Older pupils could talk about the differences between bullying and other forms of behaviour. Pupils who talked to inspectors said that staff would be quick to sort out any problems that might occur.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are taught how to keep safe in different situations, including during a fire drill, on roads and trains, when swimming and when online.
- Pupils who talked to the inspectors said they felt safe and well looked after by the school.
- Attendance is in line with national expectations, and has remained so over time. This is because the school promotes the importance of good attendance and works well with parents. The school's breakfast club has contributed to improved punctuality.
- A very large majority of parents who gave an opinion thought that their children were safe, happy and well looked after in the school, and that the school managed behaviour well.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because school leaders and governors have not ensured that teaching has remained good over time, or that pupils make good enough progress in all parts of the school.
- The recently appointed headteacher has raised expectations. She has acted quickly to improve the school. The school is improving as a result, but not yet to the extent that is needed for all pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.
- School leaders have not always monitored teaching stringently enough to ensure its good quality. This has now changed. The headteacher has ensured that the quality of teaching is monitored well and that teachers are expected to perform to a high standard. Teachers are now properly held to account for their success in improving pupils' progress and the standard of their teaching. Teaching is improving as a result.
- The school has not developed the roles of middle leaders sufficiently until very recently. The headteacher has supported middle leaders in extending their roles well. Middle leaders are now much more active in leading their subjects and areas of responsibility. However, middle leaders are not yet sufficiently involved in bringing about improvements in teaching.
- The school's self-evaluation identifies the school's strengths and weaknesses accurately. Senior leaders analyse data about pupils' achievement closely and accurately. This analysis informs the school's development plan, which contains well-judged actions designed to bring about improvements.
- The school provides pupils with a broad range of subjects. Pupils apply their writing skills to these subjects well, but do not use or apply their mathematical skills to the same extent. This limits the effectiveness of these subjects in promoting pupils' academic achievement.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are encouraged to explore their feelings and reflect on spiritual values thoughtfully. For example, in one assembly seen by inspectors, pupils were guided well to think about disappointment. This

was in the context of the World Cup.

- The school works to promote equal opportunities effectively. It guards against discrimination well through, for example, its work on a range of cultures and religions, such as Sikhism.
- The school works effectively with parents and has developed good relationships with them. This can be seen through the good attendance of pupils. However, a small minority of parents have expressed some unhappiness about the school's communication with them.
- Additional funding is spent on a range of measures designed to support eligible pupils' learning and progress. As a result, the gap between pupils eligible for additional funding and other pupils is being narrowed successfully by the school. However, eligible pupils' progress remains variable across the school.
- Other additional funding is spent effectively on developing teachers' skills in teaching physical education effectively and further enhancing pupils' engagement in competitive sports.
- The local authority knows the school well. It has given the school much challenge and support, and has helped school leaders identify the school's strengths and areas for development. The local authority has also helped ensure the accuracy of the school's assessment of pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have recently taken steps to ensure that they are better informed about the quality of teaching, they have been well supported by the headteacher and other senior leaders to enable this to happen. Governors share the headteacher's high expectations and challenge school leaders strongly and regularly. They understand data about pupils' achievement and expect school leaders to bring about the necessary improvements to teaching and progress. Governors check that teachers with good performance are properly rewarded, and that support is provided if required. They monitor the school's finances, including its use of additional funding, and ensure that these are spent where they are likely to have most impact.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	135080
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	444110

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	419
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Laidler
Headteacher	Alison Webster
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 January 2010
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